

YOUTH SERVICES POLICY

Title: Mail Precautions Next Annual Review Date: 04/29/2010	Type: A. Administrative Sub Type: 2. Personnel Number: A.2.30
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References: Website: www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/anthrax/mail/suspiciouspackages.asp ; ACA Standard 2-CO-5D-01 (Administration of Correctional Agencies); and YS Policy C.5.2 "Duty Officers and Reporting of Serious Incidents"	
STATUS: Approved	
Approved By: Mary L. Livers, Deputy Secretary	Date of Approval: 04/29/2009

I. AUTHORITY:

Deputy Secretary of Youth Services as contained in La. R.S. 36:405. Deviation from this policy must be approved by the Deputy Secretary.

II. PURPOSE:

To establish uniform procedures relating to the receipt and handling of all mail and/or packages received from external sources. The guidelines, though applicable to a wide variety of circumstances, are particularly oriented in response to suspected letters and packages that could possibly be contaminated with anthrax or other potential biochemical agents.

III. APPLICABILITY:

Deputy Secretary, Undersecretary, Assistant Secretary, Deputy Assistant Secretaries, Facility Directors, Regional Managers, Central Office Duty Officers, and all personnel who receive and disseminate mail for staff assigned to all units of Youth Services (YS).

IV. DEFINITIONS:

Anthrax - A spore-forming bacteria (*bacillus anthracis*) originating in cattle and other plant-eating mammals that has been used as an effective biological weapon. Humans can contract anthrax spores in three ways: through a cut or opening in the skin, by inhalation, or by eating infected meat. Vaccines can protect against anthrax, and antibiotics can treat the disease in its early stages.

Regional Managers - Managers of the Regional offices located throughout the state.

Unit Head - Deputy Secretary, Facility Directors, and Regional Managers.

YS Central Office - Offices of the Deputy Secretary, Undersecretary, Assistant Secretary, Chief of Operations, Deputy Assistant Secretaries, and their support staff.

V. POLICY:

It is the Deputy Secretary's policy that every precaution shall be taken to ensure the safety of staff and youth in the care of YS. This includes the careful inspection of incoming mail and packages to ensure protection against anthrax and other potential biochemical agents.

VI. PROCEDURES:

- A. Each Unit Head shall ensure the availability of latex gloves and protective face/eye wear, which protects the exposed areas of the body from foreign material, for use by staff. In most cases, latex gloves and long-sleeved garments are sufficient.
- B. All personnel should be alert and watchful for packages and letters as follows:
 - 1. That are unusual in appearance or appear different from mail normally received by an individual recipient, unit or section;
 - 2. With sizes not customarily received by a particular office;
 - 3. Leaking, stained or emitting a strange or unusual odor;
 - 4. Having a powdery residue; or
 - 5. Having a city and/or state postmark that is different from the return address.
- C. Particular attention should be exercised when opening mail.
- D. If a suspicious or threatening package or letter is discovered, staff should take the following steps:
 - 1. Do not open;

2. Notify immediate supervisor;
 3. Contain the package or letter by:
 - a. Plastic zip lock (triple bag);
 - b. Garbage bag (triple bag);
 - c. Steel can;
 - d. Poly containment vessel; or
 - e. Simply cover with available material.
 4. Evacuate and seal off the immediate area; and
 5. Wash hands with soap and water. If it is determined by supervisory staff to be a credible threat, notify the appropriate YS Central Office Duty Officer, who shall in turn notify the Deputy Secretary.
- E. Coordination of further response with State Police shall be handled by the Deputy Secretary. Instructions relative to site clean up shall be provided by State Police.
- F. Employee responsibilities in the event of discovery of a potentially dangerous substance are as follows:
1. Remain calm;
 2. Contact immediate supervisor;
 3. Thoroughly wash hands with soap and water;
 4. Do not clean or brush clothes;
 5. If possible, carefully remove contaminated clothing, jewelry, etc. (unless doing so would add to contamination) and place into appropriate sealable containers;
 6. Do not attempt to clean or collect powder;
 7. Upon release by appropriate authorities, shower with soap and water at home as soon as practical;
 8. Change into fresh clothing; and
 9. Seek medical attention from family doctor or facility medical staff.

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- G. Supervisory responsibilities in the event of discovery of a potentially dangerous substance are listed below:
1. Evacuate immediate area as appropriate;
 2. Isolate contaminated individuals from other employees; however, do not allow the contaminated individual to leave the premises until they have been released by appropriate emergency response personnel;
 3. Isolate suspicious packages and restrict access to affected area; and
 4. Make a list of all persons either directly affected or in the immediate area of exposure.
- H. Staff are encouraged to access the Center for Disease Control website at www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/anthrax/mail/suspiciouspackages.asp to examine further guidelines for handling mail and packages.

Previous Regulation/Policy Number: A.2.30

Previous Effective Date: August 11, 2005

Attachments/References: Website: www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/anthrax/mail/suspiciouspackages.asp